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SUBJECT: ANTI-DEFAMATION LEAGUE POSITION ON ARMENIAN GENOCIDE DRAWS LITTLE ATTENTION IN ARMENIAN PRESS

¶1. (U) Armenian media outlets have not played up the recent decision by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) to recognize the Armenian "genocide." Virtually all television stations reported the news in a brief, straightforward manner. The newspapers HAYASTANI HANRAPETUTIUN and AZG carried the news in short articles on the front page. ARAVOT carried it inside. All three titled the story along the lines "Jewish Organization Changes its Mind." None carried any commentary. Armenpress news agency reported on the turmoil caused by the decision in the Turkish government. The GOAM itself has had nothing to say on the matter.

¶2. (U) Slightly more attention was given to the earlier decision to dismiss the New England regional director of the ADL for breaking with the organization by using the term "genocide." On August 21, AZG, GOLOS ARMENII and ARAVOT newspapers, as well as all TV channels, reported the dismissal and several expressed regret. Aghavni Harutiunyan, the leading reporter of AZG newspaper, titled her article "Jewish Organization and U.S. President act the same way -- They dismiss those who speak about genocide." ARAVOT newspaper labeled its article simply: "In the footsteps of (former Ambassador) Evans."

¶3. (SBU) COMMENT: The low-key coverage of the ADL decision reflects the fact that "genocide" affirmation is hardly newsworthy here. The facts are self-evident to most Armenians, and they tend to be much less emotionally invested in following each twitch of the "genocide" debate abroad than either their Turkish neighbors or the Armenian-American community. As Armenia has only a tiny Jewish population and practically no history of anti-Semitism, this low-key reaction in the Armenian press and public may also be attributed, in part, to an overall unfamiliarity with the ADL, and why its opinion on the issue should be of interest. END COMMENT.

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